97-84120-11

Wells, Henry

The American Express in its relation to Buffalo

Buffalo, N.Y.

1938

97-84120-11
MASTER NEGATIVE #

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
PRESERVATION DIVISION

BIBLIOGRAPHIC MICROFORM TARGET

ORIGINAL MATERIAL AS FILMED - EXISTING BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD

308
Z
Box 440 Wells, Henry, 1805-1878.
The American express in its relation to Buffalo; a paper prepared in 1863 at the request of the Buffalo historical society by Henry Wells ... Edited by Robert W. Bingham ... Buffalo, The Buffalo historical society, 1938.
18 p.

67248

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: *Reproductions may not be made without permission from Columbia University Libraries.*

TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

FILM SIZE: 35mm REDUCTION RATIO: 11:1 IMAGE PLACEMENT: IA (IIA) IB IIB

DATE FILMED: 6/24 INITIALS: TLM

TRACKING # : MSH 25085

FILMED BY PRESERVATION RESOURCES, BETHLEHEM, PA.

BR

THE AMERICAN EXPRESS

IN ITS RELATION TO BUFFALO.

308
Z
Box 440

THE

AMERICAN EXPRESS

IN ITS RELATION TO

BUFFALO.

PRINTED BY
BAKER, JONES, HAUSAUER, INC.
BUFFALO, NEW YORK

THE

AMERICAN EXPRESS

IN ITS RELATION TO

BUFFALO.

A PAPER PREPARED IN 1863

AT THE REQUEST OF

THE BUFFALO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

By HENRY WELLS,

President of the American Express Company.

•

EDITED BY ROBERT W. BINGHAM,

Director of The Buffalo Historical Society

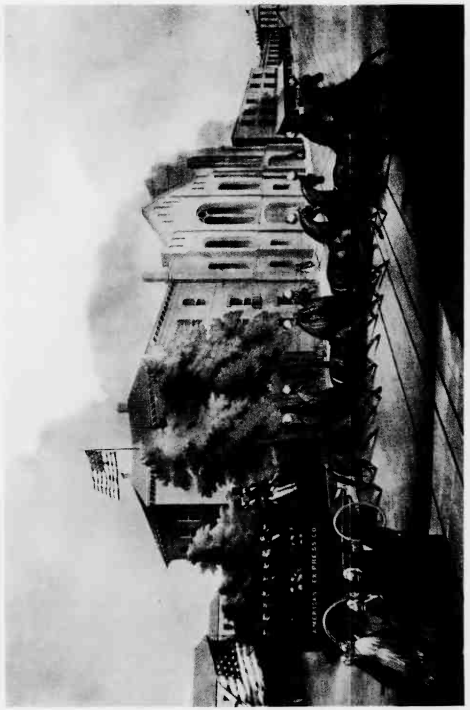
Buffalo, N. Y.

THE BUFFALO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

.....

1938

974
Buffalo Hist. Soc. of County
3-20-58



Turn-out of the American Express Company, 1856.
Location, Niagara and Franklin Streets. Mr. Fargo in foreground, talking to lady. (From an old lithograph by Sage, Sons & Co.)

FOREWORD.

Henry Wells, the author of the following paper, was born in Thetford, Orange County, Vermont, on December 12, 1805. As a young boy, he removed to Seneca County with his father, a Presbyterian missionary who, from 1814 to 1825, preached in the churches of the neighborhood.

In 1841, after trying various occupations, Henry Wells became an agent for Harnden's Express Company with his office at Albany, New York. That same year, he became associated with George E. Pomeroy and Crawford Livingston in an express company of their own under the name of Pomeroy and Company's Albany and Buffalo Express. Pomeroy sold his interest to Livingston and soon after the organization became Livingston, Wells and Company. In 1842, Pomeroy and Company established a Letter Express and in 1845 Livingston, Wells and Company inaugurated this service between New York and Buffalo.

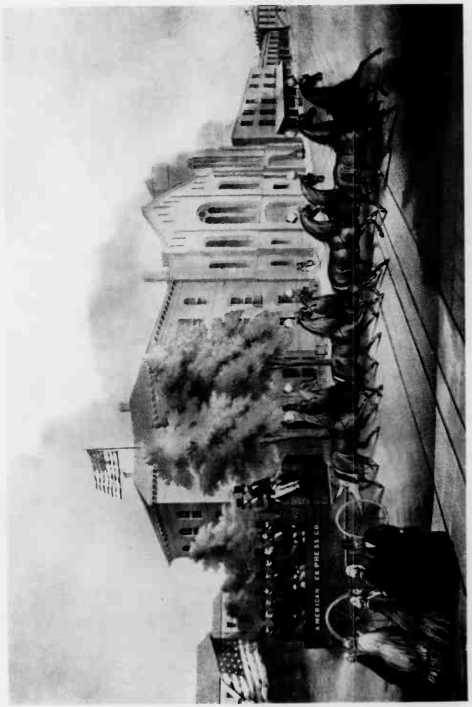
That same year, Henry Wells joined William G. Fargo and Daniel Dunning in organizing Wells and Company's Western Express operating between Buffalo, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis. He removed to Buffalo and established residence at 69 Seneca Street. The offices of Wells and Company, also of Livingston, Wells and Pomeroy were located at 1 Exchange Street.

In 1846, Wells sold his interest in the Western Express to William A. Livingston and removed to New York City where he continued in business with Crawford Livingston as the Livingston, Wells and Company's Express with William A. Livingston, 159 Main Street, as the Buffalo agent.

In 1850, Wells and Company; Livingston, Fargo and Company; and Butterfield, Wasson and Company formed a joint stock

INTENTIONAL SECOND EXPOSURE

Fairfield Historical Society



TURN-OUT OF THE AMERICAN EXPRESS COMPANY, 1850.
Location, Niagara and Franklin Streets. Mr. Fargo in foreground, talking to lady. (From an old lithograph by Sage, Sons & Co.)

FOREWORD.

Henry Wells, the author of the following paper, was born in Thetford, Orange County, Vermont, on December 12, 1805. As a young boy, he removed to Seneca County with his father, a Presbyterian missionary who, from 1814 to 1825, preached in the churches of the neighborhood.

In 1841, after trying various occupations, Henry Wells became an agent for Harnden's Express Company with his office at Albany, New York. That same year, he became associated with George E. Pomeroy and Crawford Livingston in an express company of their own under the name of Pomeroy and Company's Albany and Buffalo Express. Pomeroy sold his interest to Livingston and soon after the organization became Livingston, Wells and Company. In 1842, Pomeroy and Company established a Letter Express and in 1845 Livingston, Wells and Company inaugurated this service between New York and Buffalo.

That same year, Henry Wells joined William G. Fargo and Daniel Dunning in organizing Wells and Company's Western Express operating between Buffalo, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis. He removed to Buffalo and established residence at 69 Seneca Street. The offices of Wells and Company, also of Livingston, Wells and Pomeroy were located at 1 Exchange Street.

In 1846, Wells sold his interest in the Western Express to William A. Livingston and removed to New York City where he continued in business with Crawford Livingston as the Livingston, Wells and Company's Express with William A. Livingston, 159 Main Street, as the Buffalo agent.

In 1850, Wells and Company; Livingston, Fargo and Company; and Butterfield, Wasson and Company formed a joint stock

organization under the name of the American Express Company. Two years later, Henry Wells and William G. Fargo founded the famous Wells, Fargo Express Company.

In later life, Mr. Wells endowed Wells College, the corner stone of which was laid in July 1867. He died in Glasgow, Scotland, December 10, 1878, while on a trip abroad for his health.

William G. Fargo, who was so closely associated with Henry Wells in these famous enterprises, was born in Pompey, New York, May 20, 1818. When thirteen years of age, he, as a post rider, carried the mail twice each week on a forty mile circuit from Pompey through Watervale, Manlius, Oran, Delphi, Fabius and Apulia.

He married Miss Anna H. Williams in 1840 and after the failure of a partnership in the grocery business with his brother Jerome, removed to Auburn in 1841, accepting the freight agency of the new Auburn and Syracuse Railroad. The following year he became a messenger for Pomeroy and Company's Express. In 1843, Fargo was appointed agent at Buffalo, where he had removed in November of that year, and soon after, his association with Henry Wells began.

William G. Fargo's beautiful mansion and grounds, which occupied the entire city block bounded by Jersey Street, West Avenue, Pennsylvania Street and Fargo Avenue, will be recalled by old Buffalo residents. He became Mayor of Buffalo in 1861 and was again elected in 1863. Mr. Fargo died on August 3, 1881, at the age of sixty-three years.

—R. W. B.

THE

AMERICAN EXPRESS

IN ITS RELATION TO BUFFALO.

by HENRY WELLS

You have requested me to prepare for the Buffalo Historical Society, a paper on the rise and progress of the Express business—perhaps most of its rise as your Society has its vision closest to the rescue of the Past from oblivion. I cannot but congratulate you, before I do the particular duty which you entrust to me, that there *is* in your young City a Historical Society. It is very seldom in the history of Cities, of any gathering or association of men, that the effort is made, to give the light of truth and exactness, and detail, to its earliest condition—before it is too late.

You, and those so honorably associated with you, have begun this duty while you can have the truth from living voices, and you have done well. I have the warmest sympathies with Buffalo, by the recollection of many years of my life passed in its midst. Whatever advances Buffalo is pride to myself.

I am looking back on the Express business and it is easy to look back. It was when it was in the doubt of a new and almost unknown business that the prediction of success, was not easy to make, but I made it, because I felt it. I believed a business had been opened which the People would never consent to see closed, and I can calmly look around me and see that my confidence was not misplaced.

Now the Express business is to Buffalo a fixed and settled rule of their business life. It would disarrange all the machinery of the day, were it to cease. It has its place with the canal and the rail and the telegraph and the mail—with all that we have learned to know is indispensable. It is a servant of the People without whom the People declare they cannot "keep house." When it commenced among you, it was by the vast majority of those, who thought it likely to last long enough to think of it at all, regarded as visionary, a word which is the medicine administered to all those who rise very early in the morning of enterprise.

I do not doubt that a great many people are very much indebted to me for furnishing them as much amusement as my trunks and my hopes and my promises, produced.[1] It was too bold to believe that men would trust their millions to our messengers. I could tell your Society how many millions we have carried in a safety that has become a proverb. I do not blame those who thought our hopes and our promises far ahead of the times—so far ahead that we could never see a good time. I would rather be grateful that the good time *did* come.

The Express business might be traced back, and it often has been to the practise which was common in the days of stage coach and mail wagon, of trusting parcels of money, and bundles, small or large—boxes of all sizes, and bandboxes, to the driver, who was supposed to be ex-officio, honest, and not forgetful and to possess a universal acquaintance, and of course this was the germ of the business, but it might never have gone beyond this.

It might to this hour have been conducted amidst all the uncertainties of being an outside occupation, something to be done with other business, instead of being a duty concentrating all that those who are employed to do it, can furnish of brain and hand.

We remember that James Watt studied very attentively the steam as it escaped from the spout of the tea kettle, but he did not stop with this.

William F. Harnden[2] took the bold step by which the "Express business,"—the business of carrying parcels and packages as fast

[1] Samuel M. Welch in "Recollections of Buffalo" states: "I very well remember seeing tall Henry Wells, early in the forties climbing out of a sleigh in front of Steele and Peck's Bookstore, then at 206 Main St. (old number) with his hand satchel of express matter, and in the sleigh some packages of freight, valuable or destructible goods, which made up the manifest of Wells & Company Express, which doubled the road from Albany to Buffalo twice weekly, the senior proprietor acting as messenger and general clerk."

[2] William F. Harnden was born in Reading, Massachusetts, on the 23rd of August, 1813.

In 1837, he served as conductor on the Boston and Worcester Railroad, and in 1838, became ticket agent for the same organization. It was at this time that James Hale of the Tontine Coffee House in New York persuaded him to act as messenger for the merchants and brokers. Thus with the carpet bags as a conveyance the Harnden's Express was inaugurated in the year 1839. The service extended from Boston to New York via the Providence Railroad and New York Steamboat Company's lines. In 1840 he established a "European" express, so-called. The following year an additional line was placed in operation between Boston and Albany with Henry Wells as its Albany agent.

Harnden who has often been called the originator of the express died in Mount Auburn near Boston, January 14, 1845. His company was finally absorbed by Adams Express Company.

as possible with a special care to their safety in transportation, and their sure delivery, for it means all that—the step by which this was organized. It does not come within the province of this communication to relate the detail of Mr. Harnden's experiences.

I was in his employ and recommended him to extend his express line from Albany to Buffalo, and as transportation was offered, to Chicago, Mr. Harnden did not believe that the People were there and he declined. His words of declination were "If Mr. Wells chose to run an Express to the Rocky Mountains he might—He [Mr. H] would not do it."

It was a strong expression then, with a far and wild figure for its illustration. But far and wild as that was, may I not be permitted to refer gratefully, to the fact, that beyond the distant limit which Mr. Harnden fixed, there is not a pathway—a road—a highway but that there men trust their most valuable property, if they wish its location changed, to Wells, Fargo & Co.—and the Rocky Mountains are for that firm only a way station!

At my suggestion Mr. George E. Pomeroy[3] started an Express from Albany to Buffalo, but relinquished it after a very few trips. The addition of Crawford Livingston[4], and Henry Wells, made the well remembered firm of Pomeroy & Co.—and the business between these Cities was soon organized—the difficulties seen in all their power, and the determination to overcome them formed. I do not soften or smooth or disguise those difficulties. They look ugly even seen through the forgetfulness of so many years—for they existed in the hardest of practical rough realities.

You will smile at the recital of the physical difficulties, for Improvement has made changes too great to allow you to recollect the past.

Remember that we encountered them, while all the time our mind was strained in the cares that belong to a business whose

[3] George E. Pomeroy was initiated into the express business in 1841 as a messenger between Albany and Buffalo for Harnden's Express under the direction of Henry Wells who was the Harnden representative in Albany. Becoming discouraged, he was joined by Henry Wells and Crawford Livingston in carrying out the project under the name of Pomeroy & Co., which operated the Albany, Buffalo and Canada express with its head office at 5 Exchange Street, Albany.

Mr. Henry Wells for eighteen months performed all of the duties of express messenger and agent as well as that of proprietor.

[4] Crawford Livingston of New York City, member of the firm of Livingston, Wells & Co. Whose agent in Buffalo was the firm of Livingston, Fargo & Co. (William G. Fargo & William A. Livingston).

debtor side was full grown, and its creditor column not quite able to walk alone.

What indeed can the Buffalonian of today realize of the journeys of 1841? To night after the duties of the day, you find it expedient to go to the great Metropolis.

It is an easy affair. You find at the station, a comfortable bed prepared for you. It is capacious, commodious—watched and guarded. A few whispered words with a courteous conductor—your ticket held for you by a spring, and the roll of the rapid wheel sends sleep to you. A ceaseless vigilance of the most exact order is around you, and the morning light finds the room in which you have slept, on the descent into Albany—and the Hudson River road soon transacts for you the remainder of the journey.

Express men had no such luxury. I was over the road between Albany and Buffalo for eighteen months, and for one year of that time, I never lost a trip.

The railroad where it was in existence was a strap rail, very suggestive of snake-heads—and given to run offs—and the common road of which there was sixty-five miles, was to be endured in summer, and in the spring and fall was simply horrible.

I have been eighteen nights out of twenty-one, upon the road and "still live."

We left Albany in the evening—one seat for myself, and one for my money trunk. The other trunks were in the baggage car. (What should we think of such a miscellaneous way of doing business now, when we give the sleepless vigilance of a messenger who *never* loses sight of his trust!)

Arriving at Utica at three in the morning, it is almost ludicrous to recall the fact that we—all the westward bound passengers, were forced to remain for two hours! until a locomotive should arrive from Syracuse. Two hours at the sleepiest part of the night doing nothing in a car house! If that were to be proposed now, the Legislature would be besieged for a repeal of the charter of the road that should inflict such cruelty.

There we went as far as Auburn by rail—and then "Sherwoods" coaches brought us to Geneva—and often the only place to trot was found on the Cayuga Bridge.

We found rail again from Geneva to Rochester and Batavia, and then took forty miles of staging to enter Buffalo.

Gentlemen, I am glad that I am telling this to a *Historical*

Society—that it is something so far past that we have to re-sketch a faded picture.

This trip was made once a week. When the messenger was to eat—for he was mortal—the agent came in and watched the trunk, and as for sleep that was seized, as it seized the messenger.

Let me bear a most willing testimony here to the encouragement that the Express received from that man of large thought, and large act—*Erastus Corning*[5]. He was its friend, when it needed that friendship which is the strong hand at the right time. The life of Erastus Corning is a chapter in the progress of this country which can never be omitted in its history.

Our office was in the building of Mr. Pratt[6]—and our experience though diversified by once being burnt out, has been very conservative—and as we found friends who never changed, we made very few changes of our business home among them.

How many are the names that rise in my memory of those who gave good word and deed to the Express, as working hard and hoping hard, and realizing little, it commenced its service to Buffalo.

Especially were the bankers our friends. I say the *bankers*—the Banks had died in a financial epidemic. Indeed the Commercial[7] was the only survivor, and it had a weak constitution, as it went to its long home six months afterwards—but H. R. Seymour[8], and White[9] and Williams[10], and Lucius Tiffany[11], and Robert Codd[12] and Robinson & Co.[13] gave us strong and living friendship. I can recollect, and I am glad to recollect the daily visits that were made to our office by these Bankers—anxious to see whether our list of friends increased, and whether our trunks seemed well fed by packages. It was wisely done. The Bankers of Buffalo had the good sense to see that the Express might succeed and they determined that their care over it should be known and recognized.

It may amuse you to hear that the oyster was a powerful agent

[5] President of the New York Central Railroad.

[6] Pascal P. Pratt.

[7] Commercial Bank of Buffalo—261 Main St.

[8] Henry R. Seymour & Co.—Bankers, 244 Main St.

[9] George C. White, President of White's Bank of Buffalo, 146 Main St.

[10] William Williams, Cashier, White's Bank of Buffalo.

[11] Lucius Tiffany—Exchange Broker, Mansion House.

[12] Robert Codd of the Exchange Bank of Buffalo, 162 Main St.

[13] Erastus D. Robinson & Co.—Exchange Brokers, 162½ Main St.

in expediting our progress. That very delicious shell fish was fully appreciated by the Buffalonians—and deeply they felt the sad fact that there was on one occasion toward spring, no oysters in Buffalo and Mr. Leadley[14] asked me why the Express could not bring them. Bring oysters by coach over such roads! was my astonished exclamation. His answer was the keystone to all success in enterprise.

"If I pay for them—charge just what you will?" They were brought—opened in Albany and brought to Buffalo at the cost of three dollars a hundred—and the arrival of those oysters by Express at Buffalo created a sensation as great as would today attend the coming hither of a section of the Atlantic Telegraph. They come by carloads now, and the epicure can be fastidious in his choice.

This Leadley was a genius, he afterwards removed to Chicago, and to make himself known as a master of his art, he gave a dinner on the prairie and cooked then and there his lobsters—their first appearance on the Prairies.

Many of you will remember Enoch J. Humphrey[15] who acted as a special Bank messenger for several years, and who in the days of coaches was an autocrat of a coach for his own use, and in his money guard was looked upon by the route as a power in his own right. The Government acting with him undertook to grasp the Express business to itself—a power which it never should have exercised, for no maxim in a well regulated country is more true or wise than this—that Government should do as little as possible of that which the People can do. And your citizens took this just view of the subject—for when the agents of the Government proclaimed their advantages, the Bankers, and other business men answered that they already had a People's Express, and did not need that of the Government, and the latter wisely withdrew.

But our most serious difficulty with the Government arose when we determined to overthrow the oppressive burthen of high postage.

When I observe that the English people have in a most munificent

[14] James Leidley (as the name is spelled in the directory) in 1842-44 was the proprietor of the establishment known as the "Seneca Street House" that in the early fourties occupied a site on the south side of Seneca Street near Main. Leidley left Buffalo in the year 1844 and settled in Chicago.

[15] Enoch J. Humphrey—Stage driver and special bank messenger who in 1843 attempted to start a rival express line but failed.

manner testified to Rowland Hill[16] their appreciation of his efforts to establish cheap postage, I cannot but think that Buffalo owes the Express at least, a grateful memory. Twenty-five cents was your postage on a letter to New York. There was many a man and many a woman to whom a quarter of a dollar was a very serious affair, and that fact is yet in existence.

Our firm offered to carry the letters for five cents—and it did carry them. We created a stamp for ourselves. I have one of them before me, preserved to illustrate the history of cheap postage—of an orange color—of course with the head of a lady, as associated with every good work. These stamps found ready sale, and while our mail would receive letters by the hundreds—that of the Government would take a dozen![17]

This was not to be permitted, and Government aroused its mighty head to look after the welfare of—high postage—and now as before the People came to our support.

Able men roused the popular meetings in our defense. The messengers were arrested but bail was instantly offered, and everywhere the judgment of the People was that we were Right.

A suit was brought to trial at Utica. We had against us that powerful advocate, so influential with juries, and so resistless in his

[16] Rowland Hill—A prominent member of the House of Commons who for his efforts in perfecting the postal system was knighted by Queen Victoria.

[17] In 1845, Livingston, Wells & Co. inaugurated a letter express between New York and Buffalo at a rate of six cents a letter. The Government charge was twenty-five cents, a fee necessary to meet the cost of maintaining the numerous postmasters.

The postal authorities claimed the right of all mail transportation and challenged the express company's authority to carry letters. The advocates of postal reform came to the aid of the express companies and bought stamps at the rate of twenty-five for a dollar.

Public meetings were held where resolutions were passed advocating a boycott of the Government post offices along the line of the express, until the United States Post Office reduced its rate. Although suits were instituted and messengers arrested, the Government could not stem the tide. James W. Hale instituted a letter express between New York and Boston, and Henry Wells, in behalf of a group of influential merchants offered to carry all of the Government mail at an average of five cents per letter. The offer was declined but public opinion had had its influence and Congress passed a law reducing postage to but a fraction of its former figure. The public was not satisfied, however, and the New York Cheap Postage Association was formed by a group of New York merchants in a meeting at the New York Merchants Exchange in 1848. They demanded that prepaid letters weighing less than one half ounce be carried for two cents to any part of the United States. Although this demand was not acceded to, their efforts combined with those of Henry Wells and James W. Hale were at least successful in effecting a reduction to three cents postage throughout the United States.

command, Joshua A. Spencer[18]—and when the cause went to the jury, in commiseration for us he proposed that we should consent to a small verdict, and in the clemency of the Government take gentle punishment for our offense.

We consented to another thing—to abide the decision of the jury, and our confidence was accurately placed.

They decided for us, and the Government found that it had committed a mistake, and with better sense, they determined to institute cheap postage on their own account, and as today you receive your eight letters for the same sum which was charged you in that day for one, have a kind memory for the Express that forced the Government itself to bring about this important and peaceful revolution.

Among those who spoke out openly and publicly for the right of the Express to furnish to the People, cheap postage was your neighbor, the Hon. *Lot Clark*[19] of Lockport—and he found many to aid him for the appeal was directly to the popular want.

What Buffalo found so advantageous was soon a demand of the popular convenience for the West, of which Buffalo was, as it yet remains, the Great Gateway—and of all that belongs to the extension of the Express Westward, of its rise from an affair of a few parcels to the transportation of unnumbered tons, one of your own citizens, a gentleman honored by you in public station and in private life—is the name to be associated with that. William G. Fargo saw and measured alike the difficulty and the success, and he gave his sagacity and his energy, to the duty he has performed so well.

Your wharves are now an object of wonder in Europe because of the vast wealth, of the only real wealth in the world—the stuff for bread, that is poured over them.

A navigator and a mariner population are there, but in the earlier day, those wharves were the threshold over which all travellers stepped on their way westward.

Stately boats, and stout sailors and favorite captains, were in everyone's talk of the day, and the perils of these seas paled the

[18] Joshua A. Spencer—a noted lawyer of the East.

[19] Lot Clark was a prominent citizen of Lockport in the second quarter of the 19th century. He was a member of the Albany Company operating in real estate in East Lockport, one of the first vestrymen of Christ Church, and a Director of the first Suspension Bridge Co.

cheek of all who sought to find their home in the New States.

How many who hear these words of familiar reminiscence this evening, will recollect that terrible night in October 1844[20], and if you were to ask me, if I remember it, my sufficient answer would be, that I passed it on Lake Erie in a struggle between life and death, amidst a tempest which has had no equal in the records of our storms. It was the duty of the Express to go—whatever might be the temper of the Lake. The traveller might go, or he might conclude that the roof of the American[21] was a better harbor when the black cloud seemed about to issue its declaration of war.

The Express messenger had no such choice. Whatever was before him, he *must* encounter it, and if he did not literally follow his chest to the bottom, he did send after it! and Mr. Fargo would not permit old Erie even an iron safe in which to keep its valuables!

Now it may be storm or sunshine as it pleases—the Lake may be as tame or as wild, as best suits its variable temper—the messenger is in his car, and the daring locomotive cuts asunder the storm. I bear willing testimony to the enterprise with which Mr. Fargo, and the skilful men he has associated with him, have brought the westward Express to its present complete power to serve the People to the utmost wish for surety, and safety, and rapidity.

There are details of our line between Albany and Buffalo which have already found historical record.

[20] On October 18-19, 1844, one of the most destructive storms in the history of the community swept Buffalo. The wind that had been blowing for several days from the north-east shifted suddenly about midnight to the south-west and increased to the fury of a gale. The water in the harbor rose fifteen feet in a short period and driven by the wind swept through the lower part of the unprotected City. The Commercial Advertiser the following day listed forty-four citizens dead or missing. Shipping was demoralized—many boats beached, and twelve out of a crew of thirteen from a ship out of Buffalo were lost in a wreck off Point Abino. Later the breakwall was constructed to protect the City from lake storms.

The Commercial Advertiser of October 19 states: "Since the above was in type we have seen Mr. Henry Wells who was on board the St. Louis. He says the boat got up within three miles of Dunkirk when she broke a shaft, and was forced to put back, and by the use of one wheel and the aid of the jib was able to make port. The upper cabin and light frame work were considerably injured. Three men and a boy, deck passengers, were washed overboard during the height of the gale. Mr. Wells had a large amount of specie in charge, all of which is safe."

[21] American Hotel erected in 1836 on the west side of Main Street south of Court, adjacent to the Eagle Tavern. The Hotel was destroyed by fire in 1850, rebuilt and again burned in 1865.

The association of Wells, Butterfield & Co.[22]—the successive reorganizations of the American Express Company, until it has its office ready everywhere to do everything—is familiar to you. Arriving in Buffalo with a trunk scarcely recognized as one of the regular army of commerce—much more like its forlorn hope—a good Providence has spared my life and my mind to me, to know that wherever there are loyal American citizens there is an Express Office, and that if I want to send a package into the enemy's lines[23], I can do so whenever our Army goes there, by some of our brave boys who have left our service, but not our compensation, to follow the order of the Government.

The arrival of goods "by Express" was heralded all along the Road and the merchant that employed us, found in that act a certificate that he was a wide awake man, and his neighbor soon followed his example. There was of course then, as there is now, no end to the unreasonableness of men who expected the Express to perform impossibilities or to do hard work for harder pay.

There was one very powerful business rule. I recommend it to every young man who hears this. It was concentrated in the word, courtesy.

There was a good many years since, a man associated with us, in the Express business—he has long since passed away. He could and he did write letters, and on one (out of many) occasions, he wrote an especially savage letter to some one with whom we had business. He handed it to me that I might see how he had punished our correspondent.

I handed the letter back to him saying only, it was a luxury we were not able to indulge.

We were very particular in civilities to the newspapers. No spark flashed news in that time. We could beat the mail twenty four hours, and to bring a New York paper, that time ahead was an achievement which told the People the Express *was* alive.

We took the message by special express, and our messengers would tell us, of the engine jumping over the flatrail—stories

[22] John Butterfield was a man of extraordinary ability who started his business career as a stage driver and bank messenger. The latter profession made him a valuable asset as a member of the firm of Wells, Butterfield & Co. He rose to the ownership of nearly all of the stage lines in Western New York and was the founder of a line of steamers on Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River.

[23] Confederate Lines.

rather tough to tell you now, but founded on escapes that were next to the miraculous.

Buffalo was brought nearer to the Metropolis, and the way prepared for its present condition, when your admirable Press places the Latest News, in all the glory of the most skilful headings, morning and night before you, as fully as is enjoyed by the citizens of the Seaboard Cities. I confess I do not know how Buffalo could ask for more. It has every luxury of New York, except the Aldermen and the Taxes, and perhaps you are coming to that!

Mr. Blossom[24] was our first Agent, and Buffalo has continued to be a great central point for our business.

Here the West begins. I believe that from the upper stories of Wells, Fargo & Co.'s office in San Francisco[25], we see through the Golden Gate where it ends, for thence ships seek the East again.

The men who organized the Express, who took the roughest of its hard work, and before system had smoothed the way, were found in every place of difficulty are, I gratefully record it, most of them yet living to witness just what they desired above all things, the full confidence of the People in it. My associates in the direction are as vigorous and as enterprising as ever. Mr. Fargo, even while I utter this, is taking the journey which in the day of Lewis and Clarke was one of the great wonders of geographical science—the crossing of the American Continent, and others are today the first in new enterprises.

Whatever shall be the result to ourselves, your City has but one path before it—and that is to the greatness of a leading Commercial centre.

Your annual Commercial exhibit—your daily marine list, these

[24] Thomas Blossom who was also deputy postmaster of Buffalo.

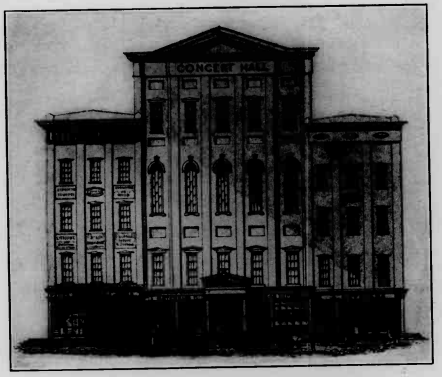
[25] Wells Fargo & Co. was founded in the Spring of 1852 when Henry Wells, William G. Fargo, John Livingston, D. N. Barney and others animated by a desire to profit by the marvelous mineral developments on the Pacific Coast organized a company bearing that name with a capital of $300,000 to do express and banking business in California.

From the beginning, the company was identified with the development of the Great West.

It early established for the benefit of isolated settlers and miners, along with its express and bank, a system of letter-carrying and delivery independent of but really auxiliary to the U. S. mails. It was in this connection that in April 1860, the company established the famous Pony express between St. Joseph, Missouri and Sacramento, California, making weekly trips and carrying letters only. Ten days usually were occupied in the journey. After the building of the first through telegraph line, the Pony express was discontinued.

are the evidences which it is impossible to resist. Rivalry has ceased to exist. Other towns will be large, but the road across this New World from the Atlantic to the Pacific, will be marked by New York, and Buffalo, and Chicago, and St. Louis, and San Francisco. Whatever else is left out, on the chart of commerce, these will be in largest letters.

And they mark also the track of the Express. When I took your little package in 1841, and you believed you *would* trust the Express, just to see what it would do—you initiated a power for good. I ask you to look all over the United States and see its results.



155-161 Main Street (*old numbers*) Niagara Block.
Home of the American Express in the early fifties.

MSH 25085

END OF
TITLE